



Changing Stereotypes into Generalizations and Hypotheses

This exercise gives you some practice in changing stereotypes into generalizations. By being able to transition from stereotypes to generalizations, you can help yourself and can also help fellow travelers and host nationals to develop stronger skills in understanding cultures.

1. Americans are superficial.

Changing it to a generalization:

Changing it to hypotheses (questions with an observable component):

2. The French are rude.

Changing it to a generalization:

Changing it to hypotheses (questions with an observable component):

3. Spaniards are laid-back.

Changing it to a generalization:

Changing it to hypotheses (questions with an observable component):

Suggested answers:

1. Americans are superficial.

Changing it to a generalization:

Many Americans seem superficial to people from other countries.

Many Americans come across as superficial in the way they talk to others.

Changing it to hypotheses (questions with an observable component):

What do Americans do that seems superficial? Do they have more small talk in their conversations than others? Do they seem hesitant to get into deeper political conversations? Do they have brief conversations about topics that do not lead into longer discussions?

2. The French are rude.

Changing it to a generalization:

Many French seem to respond rudely to U.S. Americans.

Changing it to hypotheses (questions with an observable component):

What is it that the French are doing (and to whom) that seems rude? What do I think is rude in the situation? Is it that they are speaking loudly? Is it that I speak to them in French and they respond in English? Are some French particular about the way French is spoken? Is there something specific between France and the U.S. in the political world that would bring about animosity?

3. Spaniards are laid-back.

Changing it to a generalization:

Some Spaniards seem more laid-back when compared to northern Europeans.

Changing it to hypotheses (questions with an observable component):

What are the observable differences between Spaniards and northern Europeans? Do the Spaniards take a siesta and the British typically do not? Do Spaniards seem to be more relaxed about what time a meeting begins than you are used to?